



A
S E R M O N,

DEMONSTRATING

From the Attribute of GOD's MERCY, as well
as his JUSTICE, that the Punishments of the
REPROBATE in a FUTURE STATE must be
ETERNAL.

WITH

A P R E F A C E,

In Answer to

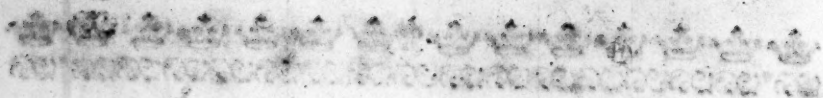
Mr. *W H I S T O N*'s

Late Treatise against the ETERNITY of

H E L L - T O R M E N T S.



(Price One Shilling.)



MEMORIAL

PRESENTING

From the American People, as well
as the JUSTICE of the
REPUBLIC in a future STATE must be
ETERNAL.



WITH

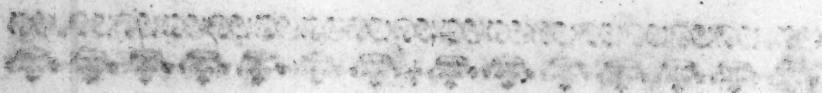
A P R E F A C E

In Answer to

MR. W. H. A. S. T. O. N.

late President of the University of

HELL-TORMENT.



(New York: 1852)

K
ETERNAL MISERY *the necessary Consequence of* INFINITE MERCY *abused.*

A 7
S E R M O N,

I N W H I C H

Is demonstratively proved, from the Attribute of
GOD's MERCY, as well as his JUSTICE,
that the Punishments of the REPROBATE in a
FUTURE STATE must be ETERNAL.

To which is prefix'd,

A P R E F A C E,

Containing a short, but Full

ANSWER to Mr. *W H I S T O N*'s

Late Treatise against the

ETERNITY of HELL-TORMENTS.

W I T H

A Plain and Certain Rule to find out when the
Terms EVER, FOR-EVER, ETERNAL, EVER-
LASTING, and the like, in any Passage through-
out the whole Scripture, are to be taken in a li-
mited Sense for an A G E, or other determin'd
Duration, and when in an unconfin'd one for a
Duration properly ETERNAL.

By * * * * *

L O N D O N:

Printed for T. COOPER, at the *Globe* in *Pater-noster-Row*.

MDCCXL.





P R E F A C E.



THE following Sermon was intirely finish'd and prepared for the press as it now stands, some days before the coming out of Mr. *Whiston's* odd medley of quotations. Nevertheless, if I had found any thing, in that extraordinary piece, worthy a special attention; I wou'd have been at the pains of inserting it in the body of my discourse. But, upon the nicest perusal, I have been able to pick nothing out of it, which could deserve such a compliment. The texts are so jumbled, and often so foreign; the remarks so trivial, and little to the purpose; and the whole is so puff'd with affectation of learning, and yet so very empty of the reality; that I should not think it worth the least notice, but for that regard I owe, and shall always be careful to pay, to the public, in general.

Had this gentleman been as sincerely fond of truth, and as much in earnest about clearing up

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the important doctrin concerning the *eternal duration* of *future punishments*, as he pretends to be; he would have search'd to the bottom, and not been content to play and loiter about the surface of it, without once attempting to go any deeper. To place this matter in a full, obvious, and decisive light, he should have consider'd the divine principles on which it is essentially built, as *infinite mercy*, *infinite justice*, *immutable truth*, and their *inseparable relations* to one another in GOD; the *covenant* which the ALMIGHTY graciously enter'd into with his *creature*, and the *means*, *free-will* and *grace*, he afforded the creature to fulfil that covenant; the *infinite wickedness*, *insolence* and *obstinacy* of the creature in breaking it, offending infinite justice, and rejecting infinite mercy; the *infinite satisfaction* due to *infinite offences*, as compared with the *limited nature of the offender*: All these are points, on the consideration of which essentially depends the decision of the doctrin in question; and the want of weighing which with all the deliberation that is necessary has caused some letter-lull'd divines to split upon the rock of error in the very noon-light of evidence.

But then to take so many profound subjects into consideration, and to talk of them coherently, is a laborious task, requires a good deal of study, some real learning, and no small knowledge of divinity. It is more easy, sooner done, and makes a much greater shew of learning, to huddle together, by the help of a Concordance, however confusedly, an ill-pick'd heap

heap of incongruous texts, and wire-draw them to the end proposed by the unanswerable arguments, a *perhaps*, it *seems*, I *imagin*, I *suppose*, I *believe*, I *fancy*, I *ascribe*, I *take it*, and such like conjectural demonstrations. And this is the very method the voluminous Mr. *Whiston* has thought the most proper to make use of, throughout his Treatise against the proper *Eternity* of the *future Punishments* of the *Wicked*. He has, it must be own'd, been lavish enough of Scripture; but what method has he observed in quoting it? Why truly, none at all. He has given us some texts, proving the *eternity* of God's *mercy*, which no believer in God can dispute; and these he has wrested to prove that the *future punishments* of the *wicked* cannot be *eternal*. Others he has brought, which assert *that eternity*, in as express terms as can be made use of; and these he impotently labours to quibble away with an idle chicanery on the import of the words in *Greek*, of which he has given us a few instances, and one in *Hebrew*, which he has had the modesty to give us in *Italic* characters. But the much greater part of the texts, he has so liberally bestow'd upon us, he might as well have appropriated to a Treatise against the blessed Trinity. However, he has made shift to tack them to the rest, and wrest them alike to his merciless purpose, by the help of such childish remarks, and pueril conjectures, as would be inexcusable in any man of sense, who was not of his years.

To come to a perfect knowledge of reveal'd truths, it is, without doubt, absolutely necessary to recur to that sacred repository of divine revelations, the HOLY SCRIPTURES. But still to obtain any light from the sacred mysteries there enshrined, 'tis essentially necessary also, in reading them, to keep always in view the divine attributes of that eternal sovereign Truth who dictated them, and to eye those attributes abstracted from all the imperfections which our groveling conception is apt to vest them with. This is one means indispensably requisite towards a right understanding of Holy Writ, especially where texts seem to contradict one another. And without this means, it will be totally impossible to reconcile any seemingly opposite terms of expression we there meet with: on the contrary, we must lie open to the most wretched inevitable confusion.

Indeed the laborious gentleman above-mention'd, to make some amends for his deficiency in so material a point, has given us a slip-knotted string of authors, some of credit and some of none, as a support to his odd conjectures, and has been absent enough to think them to his purpose. What is very singular, and quite in his own way, is the method he has observed in doing this. Those venerable fathers, whose authority against him all his artifice could not elude, he has been pleas'd very modestly to pass over un-noticed, or to brand with the name of heretick; and such avow'd hereticks as chime with him in his errors, he has most generously promoted to the
dignity

dignity of fathers. By the authority of such as these he has apocryphised many texts of authentic Scripture, and by his own undisputed authority, has swell'd the sacred code with apocryphal and even spurious writings. Where an author of venerable authority can, however forcibly, be distorted to serve a turn, he is mention'd with respect; and where he is too plain for the most barefaced confidence to pervert, or elude, we are told, he is corrupted by interpolations, and therefore not to be depended upon; or else that what he says is a *philosophical romance*, or a *poetical flight*, and consequently of little weight: and yet when occasion serves again, the philosophical Fables of a heathen are to be the received plan of a christian system; and *Homer* and *Virgil* are orthodox divines.

But what is more curious still, is, that this gentleman's fondness for the idol of his own brain, his new-fangled *visions*, *hades*, has induced him to make use of those very passages in the ancient Roman catholic writers, in which they are manifestly arguing for a purgatory, as so many authorities for his chimerical intermediate state; tho' it is self-evident that the one system has nothing in common with the other. However, some authorities must be produced to countenance a fiction which otherwise cou'd not be swallow'd by the grossest ignorance; and therefore all plunder is lawful prize to a man who is determin'd upon gaining his point at any rate, or appearing at least to do so, with such credulous readers as take upon trust, what

what they either have not leisure or want opportunity of examining farther into.

Another artifice this author seems to triumph much in, is, a sophistic affectation of reasoning away the doctrine in question, by the very similes made use of in scripture to explain it, such as that of the *chaff*, *Mat. iii.* Whence he argues, p. 42. that as the wicked are compared to the *chaff*, which is entirely burnt up for it's destruction, it plainly implies that their punishment shall end by an utter destruction, or *what we should call annihilation.* But is not this egregious trifling? For besides that every student in philosophy knows that the *chaff*, which is burnt up by fire, is not, strictly speaking, totally annihilated, but rather corrupted into a different substance: If Mr. *Whiston* mean'd to personate the divine, the philosopher, or the man of letters, he should have remember'd that for parities, comparisons, or similes to be good and just, it is by no means material for them to run parallel in every circumstantial particular, but in such only as they are brought to express. Thus St. *John Baptist*, to give some express idea of the torments destin'd for the wicked, compares their persons to the *chaff*: and as long as the parity gives the analogy between both, with regard to their being the destin'd fuel of fire, it matters little whether there is any farther analogy in it: the parity is strictly just in the particular it was used to express, and that is sufficient. But to conclude, because they are analogous with regard to the circumstance of burning, that therefore they must

must be so too with regard to the length of their duration, is such reasoning as may be tolerated in a man while he is dreaming, but will by no means bear telling when he awakes. For a proof of this I shall content myself with bringing one instance out of *Esdras*, as quoted by this gentleman: *As the heavens, says Esdras, are higher than the earth, so are his (God's) ways higher than our ways.* Now wou'd it not set this gentleman a-yawning, should any man tell him with a grave face, *Last night, in my sleep, methought, in reading in the ivth of Esdras, I found out that the distance between our ways and those of God is not absolutely infinite; for that distance is compared only to the space between heaven and earth, which cannot possibly be infinite?* However Mr. *Whiston* might excuse the dreamer, I fancy he would hardly, if perfectly awake himself, take such a dream for a rational argument. But I have dwelt longer on this subject than the weight of it deserves; and I should think myself blameable for so doing, if reasonings, like these, did not make up most of the weightiest arguments in that author's animadversions.

The two main pillars, however, on which he builds his whole sophistic machinery, are *first*, that the words עולם, *Olam*, in *Hebrew*, and Αἰών, *Aión*, in the *Greek*, do by no means signify a co-eternity with God: *second*, that St. JOHN, in the *Apocalypse*, calls the damnation of the wicked a *second death*. But, on how quick-sanded a bottom these principles are grounded,
will

will best appear from examining them separately.

First, then it is very true, that these words do not strictly import a *co-eternity* with God, in any of his creatures: for *co-eternity*, in the true sense of the word, signifies a duration equal with God, as well *a parte ante* or *anteriorly*, as *a parte post* or *for the future*, which is probably the reason why no word is ever made use of, in the sacred Scripture, liable to such an interpretation, where creatures are spoken of: and this may serve for an answer to his trivial remark, p. 97. as far as it relates to hell-torments. For as to his unpious hint, with regard to the antiquity of the Son of God, it is foreign to the present purpose to take any notice of it; especially as I design hereafter to treat that matter at large. It is nothing better then than a mere quibble of Mr. *Whiston's*, to pretend that the terms, *Olam* and *Aión*, were ever taken by any in a *co-eternal* sense. For such divines and fathers, as have made use of the word *co-eternal*, have applied it only in a limited improper sense, as signifying a duration equal to that of God, merely *a parte post*, or *posteriorly*. But this is too trite a remark among the truly learned, to need insisting on any farther. It is equally true, that those words do sometimes mean no more than *an age*, or a *limited*, or *undetermin'd duration*. But it is absolutely inconsistent with truth to say, that they never naturally and strictly signify an *endless*, *eternal*, *properly eternal duration*, *a parte post*, or *for the future*, even when applied to
Creatures.

creatures. The natural sense then of the above-mention'd words in dispute, is the utmost duration of the persons or things, they are spoken of, or appropriated to. Thus, when they are spoken of things in their nature, of a limited duration, they signify nothing more, than that they shall *last* for as *durable an age* as their perishable existence will admit of: but when they are applied to GOD, or to such of his creatures as are immortal in an essential part of their substance, they absolutely import an endless duration. And that this latter is the natural true import of the words in question, is evident from the very etymon of the Greek *Αἰών*, *Aion*, which is *Aei*, *Aei*, semper, *forever*, and the root of the Hebrew *עולם*, *Olam*, which is *עלם*, *Elem*, and signifies *ABSCON-DITUM*, *INVESTIGABILE*, *hidden*, or *un-searchable*, and whence is form'd *עולם*, *Olam*, *seculum æternum*, an *endless age*, or a duration, as it were, hidden and unsearchable in it's beginning and end, by an elegance peculiar to the Hebrew language.

To know therefore for certain when the words *עולם*, *Olam*, and *Αἰών*, *Aion*, or their *derivatives*, import an *eternal* duration, or only a limited one; we are to examin into the nature of the beings they are applied to. If it be such as requires their existence to cease, they must mean nothing more than an age, or a *very lasting duration*; but if it is essentially inde-
fectible, as that of the Divine Being is *per se*, *of itself*; and all Intellectual Beings are *per ipsum*, *by him*, then they must naturally imply an end-

less eternal, *properly eternal* existence. Thus where they are applied to the ceremonial laws of the Jews, it is evident they can mean nothing more than that those laws should have existence till the coming of Christ, and no longer; at which time they were essentially to cease, and give way to the more glorious dispensation of the law of grace. So when spoken of the servitude of Gentil inhabitants among the Jews, they can signify only a continual bondage during their natural life. But when they are made use of to signify the duration of God's divine attributes, or the existence of his intellectual creatures in a future state, they must signify an *eternal*, *properly eternal* lastingness; both being equally immortal, and indefectible by nature *a parte post*, or *futurely*, with this difference only, that the one is *so per se, of itself*, the others *per alium, from another*. And this rule, if carefully attended to by Hebrew and Greek readers of holy writ, will serve them as a sure and safe key to find the true sense of the above-mention'd words, wherever they meet with them throughout the whole sacred code.

But to return to our subject, that mankind are *eternal* beings, *properly eternal*, *a parte post*, that is, with regard to their *future state*, but especially the Blessed, and why they are so, *David* tells us in Psalm cxii. *בִּי-לְעוֹלָם לֹא-יָסוּף*. *מוט לזכר עולם יהיה צדיק*. *Ὅτι εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα ὁ σαλευθήσεται, εἰς μνημόσυνον αἰῶνων ἔσται δίκαιος*. *Quia non commovebitur in seculum in memoria æterna erit justus*. *Because, (says David) he will not be*
moved

moved (or disturb'd) *in any age*, therefore the *just man shall be in eternal memory*. So that the Blessed, at least, according to the royal prophet, must be *eternal*; and that because he is immoveable, and not to be disturb'd by defection, or annihilation, which surely is the worst of disturbance: nor is he only indefectible in a limited sense, but not to be moved *in any age*, as the strict literal translation imports, and must import. For there needs no great share of philosophy to know that, *negatio est malignantis naturæ* is one of the first principles in logic. *A negation is malignant in its nature*, and destroys all it affects. And as the negation here affects the whole phrase, it must necessarily destroy not only all commotion, or disturbance, in the just man, but every age, or period, in which it can be supposed possible.

It is very worthy to be remark'd too, that the very same terms לעולם, *Leolam*, and εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα, *Eis ton aiōna*, אֵלֶם, *Olam*, and αἰώνιον, *Aiōnion*, which are equally used in this text to signify both an *age* and *eternity*, are equally applied in innumerable places of the holy Scripture to the duration of the Divine Being. So that granting that the word συναίδιος, *SYNAIDIOS*, be never used to signify the duration of any created being, what can this gentleman infer to his purpose? It is self-evident, that the very terms above-mention'd, so often used in Scripture to express the utmost duration of creatures, are very commonly also used there to express the duration of God's attributes, which would be highly derogatory to

his infinite greatness, were not the words naturally significative of an eternity properly such. I shall content myself, for brevity's sake, with giving one instance in a kind, and then take leave of this piddling topic. In the xxvth of *Leviticus*, the law for bondsmen runs thus:

והתנחלתם אדם לבניכם אחרים לרשת אחוה לעולם, και καταμεριεθε αυτες τοις τεκνοις υμων μεθ υμας. η εσονται υμιν αλσχιμοι εις τον αιωνα. Et hæreditate trans-

mittetis illos ad posteros & possidebitis in æternum (*five in seculum.*) *And ye shall transfer them to your children, and shall possess them forever, (or to an age.)* Concerning the ineffable

attribute of God's immutable truth, David, in Psalm cxvii. 2. says ואמת יהוה לעולם, και η αληθεια

της κυριου μενει εις τον αιωνα. Et veritas Jehovæ (*seu Domini*) manet in æternum (*five in seculum.*)

And the truth of the Lord remains forever, (or to an age.) Surely an age must here mean

an age of eternity: but let us proceed. The same royal prophet in Psal. cxix. 98. uses again the same expression concerning the divine law,

כי לעולם היא-לי, οτι εις τον αιωνα εμνησι. Quia in æternum mihi (*vel meum*) est. *Because it is ever before me (or mine.)* In Psalm cxii.

above quoted, we see he has appropriated the same terms to the duration of the Blessed.

And *Jeremiah*, in his xxiii^d chap. ver. ult. speaking of the Wicked, does the same. His words

are remarkably expressive, ונתתי עליכם הרפת, עולם וכלמות עזרם אשר לא תשכח, και δωσω εφ υμας ονειδισμον αιωνιον, η ατιμιαν αιωνιον ητις ουκ επιληθησεται.

Et dabo super vos opprobrium sempiternum & ignominiam æternam quæ nunquam oblivione delebitur.

delebitur. *And I will bring upon you an everlasting reproach, and an eternal shame, which shall never be forgotten, (or shall never be effaced by oblivion.)* Must it not then be properly eternal? I might bring innumerable other texts of this sort, if I cared to be as prolix as the long-winded Mr. *Whiston*: But those I have already produced are sufficient to prove what I advanced, and to shew how wretchedly low, as well as idle and undoctrinal, are the page-swelling quibbles about mere words, with which that gentleman has been pleased to bloat his last production. But it is time to examin the *second* grand pillar of support to his mighty battery against the proper eternity of hell-torments.

I could hardly have expected that a man, whose indefatigable drudgery in poring over the monuments of learned antiquity, should, methinks, entitle him to some thought, wou'd have been absent enough to reason so very unpertinently on so plain a text: but it is no new thing for some men to be dazzled out of evidence by the too open light it appears in. What can be more plain, than that the perdition of the wicked is both a *second death* and an eternal one? What is the *first death* but a separation of soul from the body, which, notwithstanding, is perfectly consistent, according to Mr. *Whiston's* own scheme, with the actual existence of the soul? So the *second death* is a real separation from God of both body and soul, which is likewise perfectly consistent with a farther duration of this Being, even according

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ing to the same gentleman's opinion and favourite hypothesis. For Mr. *Whiston* don't himself pretend that the wicked shall immediately be annihilated at the general judgment, when this *second death* is to be inflicted; but positively avows, that they shall be tormented for a considerable time after. So that having allow'd this *second death* to be consistent with a life capable of suffering, and suffering grievously, it must be own'd an egregious forgetfulness in this gentleman, in the same breath to wrest that *second death* to an *utter dissolution of soul and body*, in the strictest sense, as he must mean; otherwise he concludes nothing, and means nothing.

It is plain then that Mr. *Whiston*, without perceiving it, is forced to own, in the very act of denial, that the *second death* is, strictly speaking, *a state of life*. But then he denies it to be *eternal life*, or to be in perpetual punishments. This opinion of his he tells us is more reasonable, but for reasons he has none to give. That this *life of punishment*, which the gentleman himself, as I have observed, undesignedly acknowledges to be consistent with the *second* more dreadful *death*, is strictly such, we have from our Saviour, who puts the resurrection of the wicked and the good from the *first death*, upon the same footing, with regard to their being a resurrection to existence: but calls the one a resurrection to *life eternal*, the other to *fire eternal*. St. Paul is very clear upon this head, and positively tells us, that in the great day the *dead shall be raised incorruptible*. Nay, he positively
says,

says, that our *corruption must put on incorruption*, and our *mortal must put on immortality*. So that on one hand the condemnation of the wicked plainly appears to be what St. *John* calls it, a *second death*, inasmuch as it is an absolute separation from the only true life, *from the presence of God, and the glory of his power*. And on the other hand, the incorruptibility, immortality, and indefectibility of their nature, will make that separation a *natural state of life in perpetual misery*. Which may well indeed be call'd *death* (and is the worst of *deaths*) in opposition to that eternal life, that only life worth contending for, which he *that overcometh* shall be crown'd with ; and which shall be a perpetual guarantee to him from any *second death*, or separation from God.

I shall take no notice of the many self-contradictions, and gross absurdities, which have so largely contributed to the bulk of the piece before me, such as in p. 47, 53, 62, 63, and particularly in p. 64, where he most beautifully finds out, that no such being as we are shall be strictly *co-eternal* with God *a parte post*, or *futurely*, and yet that the praises of God shall be sung by the righteous for *indefectible endless ages of ages*. and p: 72, 81. and those extravagant ones, p. 85, 98, onward, p. 104, and those p. 107, which last must certainly be owing to some weakness in that gentleman's eyes, not suffering him to read any more of the texts than the scraps he there quotes. Much less shall I make any remarks on the pretty inconsistency of taking the *unquenchable fire*, and the
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the *worm that never dies*, in a literal sense, in p. 109. and yet denying the immortality of the soul in p. 72. and the equality of it's duration *a parte post*, or *posteriorly*, with God in p. 64. To set these, and many others in that piece, in the truly ridiculous light they deserve, would be the task of a volume rather than a preface. And as I shall hereafter, when leisure permits me, treat fully the sacred doctrines relating to the immortality of the soul, and the divinity of the son of God, which the gentleman so rashly blasphemes, I shall say nothing of the latter here, nor any thing more concerning the former; especially since they are not absolutely pertinent to the present subject. Whatever else in that curious work may seem to the unletter'd part of my readers to deserve solution, is already fully answer'd in the body of my sermon.

It might be expected that I should quote those venerable fathers and writers of antiquity whom Mr. *Whiston* had the modesty not to confute his own work with; and, if it was necessary, I could do it. I could quote a St. *Augustin*, l. 21. de civitat. Dei, c. 17. Enchirid. c. 112, & contra Prisc. & Orig. ---a S. *Gregory*, l. 4. Dialog. & 9. Moral. ---a St. *Isidore* de summo bono. ---a St. *Chrysostom*, Homil. 24, 50. in Mat. ---a St. *Hilarius*, in Psal. 1. and many others. But besides that this would swell a confutation of him to a voluminous size, it would have no power to confound him. For I have no reason to expect, that these fathers would fare any better with him

him than St. *Clement*, *Lactantius*, *Tertullian*, St. *Cyprian*, and others, whom he has the imitable courage to quote, and then to assure us, without being out of countenance, that they did not themselves believe a word of what they advanced: and this he demonstrates from a convincing argument, that he himself cannot believe they were in earnest. For it is observable, that there are no Divines, or Fathers, so serious and sincere, so truly wise and learned, so very good and zealous for the safety of souls, as this gentleman, if you will take his own word for it. And this, perhaps, is one reason why he is so extremely fond of quoting himself.

Tho', if I may be ingenuous without offending, I will even own, that it is a shrew'd mark with me of a bad scholar, as well as an indifferent writer, when I find an author railing against all who do not agree with him in sentiments, for ignorant fools; as it is of a bad physician, a bad divine, or a bad man, to hear the one call the rest of the faculty asses, the other treat his brethren like blockheads, and the third brand his neighbours with the character of knaves.

I do not mean to make any applications: and yet I can by no means conceal that this is a method very much made use of by that gentleman; tho' it must have been abundantly more satisfactory to his readers, had he laid aside his compliments on himself, and imputations of ignorance to others; and instead of quibbling about scripture, enter'd more deeply

into the subject he pretended to controvert. If he is convinced of what he attempts to prove; why did he not afford us one argument of solidity, or at least the appearance of one, to convince us? But this, I dare boldly say, he has no where done throughout his whole very laborious essay; tho' his neglect is not so much to be imputed to want of will as of power. I shall now dismiss this gentleman with the sincerest wishes a Christian can make, that he may never be brought to the fatal conviction of his present error, with regard to the subject in question, and be reduced to own it, to his sorrow, when too late.





PSALM LXII. 12.

*Unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy:
For thou renderest to every man
according to his work.*



O render to every man according to his work, is a very equitable thing; to pay a good servant the wages due to him for his service, according to covenant, is but right; and to punish an unfaithful servant, in proportion to the breach of his part of the covenant between him and his master, is equally right. To insist upon payment of the utmost farthing due from an ill-principled debtor, whom we have found to be able, but unwilling, to pay what he owes, is an act of justice which no one can condemn; especially if the debtor himself is an inexorable creditor to such of his unhappy debtors as are wishful, but unable, to answer his demands.

So far then God is irreproachable in his conduct towards his creatures, as, in consequence of his covenant with them, he rewards with eternal life the good, *that is*, those who love him and keep his commandments: *that is*, those who fulfil their

part of the covenant---*active affection*, and *upright action*. For tho', when they have done all, they may and must say, *they are but useless servants*, with respect to him; yet in virtue of God's ineffable promise they earn, merit, and thro' his grace become entitled to, the stipulated recompence of eternal bliss; which God's eternal truth lays him under a gracious, but indispensable obligation of conferring.

In like manner, when God punishes the WICKED, *that is*, those who do not keep his commandments, and consequently either do not love him, or love him only with a *lifeless, fruitless, inactive affection*, and punishes them in proportion to the breach of their part of the covenant he made with them; whether that proportion requires the punishment to be eternal, or only temporal, he is irreproachable in inflicting it. This is more especially self-evident with regard to that merciless part of the creation, who are inflexibly rigorous to their fellow-creatures.

Tho' God could have created such a being as Man, without laying him under any positive restrictions; and in such case that being could not have been guilty of any punishment, but what he incurr'd by violation of the laws of nature founded on eternal truth; yet as it was at God's disposal to lay what restrictions he *pleased* on the beings he was *pleased* to create, and as he actually did lay restrictions upon them, with a promise of reward for their compliance, and of punishment for their disobedience, every wilful breach of that covenant deserves a punishment proportion'd to the greatness or littleness of such breach, and God is strictly justifiable in inflicting it. Whence it appears, that God is equally just, as well in the punishments he inflicts on the wicked, as in the recompense he bestows on the good; both being the wages due to
their

their several works, according to the covenant made with them.

But where is the mercy in either? Is a man merciful in paying his servants the wages he bargain'd with them for; when once they have faithfully discharged their duty? No. They have a right to demand them: he is just to a nicety, but not merciful. When an honest man compels by imprisonment a reluctant debtor to pay the last farthing of a debt he is able to discharge, can his rigor be called mercy? No. He is irreproachably just, but in no sense merciful. And yet the sacred writer quoted in my text attributes *mercy* to GOD, for this very reason: BECAUSE he *renders to every man according to his work*; that is, eternal happiness to the good, eternal misery to the wicked. *Unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy: FOR thou renderest to every man according to his work.* That it is justice in GOD to punish and punish severely the breaches of his laws, we can easily comprehend; and that to afford the transgressors any means of escaping the severity of his justice, is mercy, we can as easily conceive. But why should their punishments be eternal? Or if they are, how shall eternal rigor be reconciled with eternal mercy?

Why shall the punishments of impenitent sinners be eternal? Because *a false ballance is abomination to the Lord: but a just weight is his delight*^a. How shall the eternity of GOD's justice inflict those eternal punishments without prejudice to his infinite mercy? In a most equitable manner, inasmuch as *mercy and truth shall go* (inseparably) *before thy face*^b, O Lord! GOD could not be just, if *Hell Torments*, the punishment of the wicked, were not eternal; and they cannot be eternal, unless GOD is as merciful as he is just in inflicting them. This I shall undertake to

^a Prov. xi. 1.

^b Psal. lxxxix. 14.

set in a clear light, by separating truth from it's appearances, in the following discourse, in which

- I. I shall prove the consistency of this doctrine from Scripture, as well according to the evidence of the words, as to the sense they are taken in by the fathers.
- II. I shall shew it's conformity with right reason, from the nature of the *Infinite Offended*, of the *finite Offender*, and of the *infinite satisfaction* due to the *Former* from the *latter*.
- III. I shall answer the most important objections that can be offer'd against this fundamental point of faith; and conclude the whole with some moral reflections.

It is no ways material to my present purpose to enquire, where the place is in which the wicked are and shall be tormented after death, nor what are the instruments of their torment. Once we are sure that they must and will be tormented, it avails but little to know, whether the place of their punishment be in the center of the earth, as the Scripture in some passages seems to express; or in the air likewise, as from others may be gather'd: whether the instruments of their torture be literally excess of heat and cold, unutterable darkness, &c. and the fire and brimstone mention'd in holy writ, the same specifically with our fire, and the sulphur we are acquainted with; or whether it shall be of a more spiritualized nature. It is sufficient for us to know, that God, who created the world out of nothing, and governs the whole creation with unlimited power, is capable of providing a proper mansion of horror for such wretches as call upon justice for punishment; and that the instruments he appoints to torment them will effectually execute his

his will. I shall leave therefore these less material enquiries for another occasion, to attend wholly to this more important question: *Whether God will eternally punish the impenitent WICKED, and whether he can be merciful in so doing?*

If we believe the sacred Scripture to be the word of God, and believe God's word to be immutably true, we cannot doubt of either. In the xxxvith chapter of *Job*, it is said to the wicked: *Because there is wrath, beware lest God take thee away with his stroke: then a great ransom cannot deliver thee.* What can we understand by these words, but the eternal torments which will ensue to impenitent sinners? The meaning of this caution is obvious: it cannot be to guard them against death; for neither wicked nor good can withstand God's stroke in that sense. The meaning then is, *beware*, that is, *be prepared by repentance*, or in other words, *beware lest he take thee away IMPENITENT with his stroke.* And why, but because *a great ransom cannot deliver thee?* There is no other ransom for great or little wickedness than the death of Christ: if then this great ransom will not deliver the impenitent wicked; he must eternally remain in the slavery of sin he died in, and consequently be eternally wretched; for if there is no ransom, no salvation for him in CHRIST JESUS, neither is there salvation in any other, as St. Peter, fill'd with the Holy Ghost, said to the Jews, in the ivth of the *Acts*.

In the same chapter of *Job*, a little lower, we are told that God is great, and we know him not, neither can the number of his years be search'd out; and five verses lower we are farther told, that by them he judgeth his people. The number of God's years, which cannot be found out, is his eternity; and by this ETERNITY he judges his people. And how shall this divine eternity make a just distinction between the good and bad part of his people, but by judg-
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ing the good to an *eternity of bliss*, the wicked to an *eternity of woe*? Wherefore *David*, in the ninth *Psalms*, praises God for *destroying the wicked*, and *putting out their name for ever and ever*. *

The same royal Psalmist tells us, in the eleventh *Psalms*, that *upon the wicked God shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and a horrible tempest: this shall be the PORTION of their cup*. If then this is all the *portion* allotted to the wicked; this is all they have to expect, and the immortality of their nature fixing them to their lot, they must *eternally* feed on the bitter, bitter cup of snares, fire, brimstone and horror. And that this is his meaning, the holy monarch expresses more fully in another place ^a, *The Lord*, says he, *shall take them away in a whirlwind, both living and in his wrath*, that is, both *living*, and *living in his wrath*, which is eternal. The Hebrew has it more express^b, *as living as his wrath*. And consequently as his wrath is *eternal*, so shall their punishment be.

David, immediately after, to account for this inflexibility of God's justice, shews it to be an ineffable effect of his mercy to the good. For *the righteous*, says he, *shall rejoyce when he see'th the vengeance*. Whence it plainly appears, that if there were no other good in it, God is at least infinitely merciful in decreeing those eternal torments to the wicked who deserve them, to enhance the felicity of the good, who must doubly rejoice in their own happiness, at the sight of what the wicked endure. Not that their joy proceeds from any cruel satisfaction, or pleasure, in seeing those wretches tormented; but from the comparison of the infinite bliss they *eternally* enjoy, with the *eternal* misery they have happily escaped, and from the clearer sight which that comparison gives them of God's

^a Psal. lviii.

justice and mercy. For the real value of every thing is best known by closely comparing it with it's opposite. And therefore the inspired monarch seems to insinuate in the same *Psalms*, that the good in reality wou'd not be fully sensible of their *eternal* happiness, but for this comparison of it with the *eternal* wretchedness of the wicked, which spirits them up to that exstastic acknowledgment of God's goodness: *Verily there is a reward for the righteous: verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth.* Well then might *David* soon after in raptures apostrophise God in the words of my text, *Unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy: FOR thou renderest to every man according to his work.*

Thus far, Christians, we have heard the sentiments of inspired *David*. Now let us listen to him in the intervals, when inspiration forsook him: *David*, when left to himself, was no more capable than we are, of ourselves, to reconcile the *for-ever* of God's justice in punishing the wicked, with the infinity of his mercy. *I remember'd God (says he Psalm lxxvii.) and was troubled: I complain'd, and my Spirit was overwhelm'd. I call to remembrance my song in the night: I commune with my own heart, and my Spirit made diligent search. Will the Lord cast off for-ever? and will he be favourable no more? IS HIS MERCY CLEAN GONE FOR-EVER? DOETH HIS PROMISE FAIL FOR-EVERMORE? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies? What more cou'd be said by the Declaimers against the eternity of Hell-Torments? Why don't the miscreants quote this for an authority? David first calls the mercy of God in question: Is his mercy clean gone for ever? And as one abyss calls on another, he presently doubts of his justice and truth: Doth his promise fail for-evermore? A rare passage for them to apply to their purpose of overthrowing the ineffable attributes of God!*

Why shou'd they blush to bring this text, who are not ashamed to pervert others much less to their purpose? Or why indeed shou'd they blush at any thing, who blush not to blaspheme God from his throne, to give vice a greater authority than it already has? But will this give you a right, O enemies of truth, to the title of merciful, which you are pleased to compliment yourselves with? It is unmerciful, you say, for God to give sinners their desert; is it mercy then for worms, for wretches, for wicked sinners, to rob God of his due? And must God be made more merciful than becomes him as God to be, merely to prove him less just than he really is, and must be? Oh age! Oh manners! How true is that of *Solomon*; *the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel!*

But where is the wonder that men, enslaved by their unruly passions, and made feeble by long habits of vice, shou'd be able to reason no better; when *David*, a virtuous man, a man after God's own heart, was liable to the same infirmity when left to himself, and to the weakness of his own understanding? But the good have still this advantage above the wicked, that tho', like these, they are liable, by the frailty of their nature, to fall into error and scepticism; yet the readiness, with which they captivate their sense to the lights of faith, enables them to rise again to a clearer knowledge of God's eternal truth. In fact, the same *David*, who was mistaken by night, retracts his nightly errors in the day; and, by the help of fresh inspiration, is enabled to reconcile God's *casting off* the wicked *for-ever*, with the continuance of his *mercy*, and the *truth* of his *promise*. *I said*, continues the royal prophet, *this is my infirmity: but I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High*. Thus the inspired *David* is by the light of grace lifted to see thro' the weakness of his natural reason, and enabled

enabled to account for God's *casting off the wicked FOR-EVER*, by the reflection *on the years of the right hand of God*, that is, the *eternity of his justice*; that *eternity* by which, as we have seen in *Job*, he is to *judge his people*. And the same Revelation which illumin'd the royal Prophet to see into the divine justice *in casting off the wicked for-ever*, enabled him in like manner to reconcile that justice with his infinite mercy, by recollecting the many wonders he had wrought to deter those wretches from incurring *eternal* torments, before his inflicting them, as well as the innumerable proofs of his goodness, by which he endeavour'd to win them to an *eternity of happiness*. *Thou art the God that do'st wonders*, says he in the same Psalm, *thou hast declared thy strength amongst the people. Thou hast with thine arm redeem'd thy people.*---*The voice of thy thunder was in the heaven*---*the earth trembled and shook. Thou led'st thy people like a flock, by the hand of Moses and Aaron.* What more cou'd a merciful God do to win mankind from the *eternal* torments he threaten'd to the wicked, than to shew them his goodness in *redeeming* them from sin, *conducting* them as a tender pastor does his *flock*, and appointing them teachers to instruct them in his will, and the means to execute it? What more cou'd he do to deter them, than *declare his strength* to them, and demonstrate his punishing power in the *voice of his thunder*? And what less cou'd he do as a just God, than *eternally* punish those obstinate wretches who wou'd neither be won nor deterr'd from the *eternal* punishments he threaten'd them with? Must his truth fail, or his mercy be destroy'd? Can they not, nay must they not, *eternally* subsist together? Yes, O Lord, yes, says David^a, *Justice and Judgment are the habitation of thy throne, mercy and truth shall* (inseparably) *go before thy face.* True indeed it

^a Psalm lxxxix. 14.

is, that thou art merciful, infinitely merciful in the very *casting off the wicked for-ever*, because *thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive: and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee*^a. But then thy being *merciful* hinders thee not from being *just* to such as despise thy forgiveness, and neglect to call upon thee. For as *thy mercy is everlasting*, so *thy truth endureth to all generations*^b.

Wherefore, says God, by the mouth of his prophet *Isaiab*^c, do not deceive yourselves, O mortals; nor think to elude the *eternal* rigour of my *everlasting* justice, by trusting to my mercy in the midst of your wickedness. I am merciful: but am equally just. And *there is no God else beside me, a just God and a Saviour*. There is no God who is a *Saviour* only, and not at the same time a *just God*. For such a Being cou'd not be God. They, who vainly imagin so, are *a people of no understanding*: that is, a people whose understanding is corrupted by a perversity of heart. And^d *therefore*, says the same Prophet, *he that made them will have no mercy on them, and he that form'd them will shew them no favour*. If then God will shew *no mercy, no favour* to the impenitent wicked, is it not plain that they must be *eternally wretched*? But that no ways proves him to be absolutely unmerciful. No, enough it is for his mercy, that, while they were fit objects of it, he shew'd it to them, by being, as the Prophet *Nabum* tells us, *as slow to anger as he was great in power*. The greatness of his power was such, that he might have justly punish'd the wicked, and doom'd them to feel the *eternal* rigour of his justice e'er they compleated their crimes, and that without injury to his mercy. How gracious then must he be to wait so long for their repentance, and how great does not his *mercy* appear in the *slowness*

^a Psalm lxxxvi. 5.^b Psal. c. 5.^c Chap. xlv. 21.^d Chap. xxvii. 11.^e Chap. i. 3.

of his anger! And ought not his justice then to shine as great in an *eternal* inflexibility towards those wretches, whom no patience could gain, and no threats could deter from their inflexible obstinacy in offending him?

Yes, surely, says the Prophet *Jeremiah*, the sin of these impenitent sinners is *written with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond*^a; and why, but that it may never be effaced? Nay, God positively says by the mouth of this same holy writer in the same place, that it never shall be effaced. Ye have *kindled a fire in my anger, which shall burn for-ever*. And how could this be, unless sinners, who are the fuel of the fire kindled in God's anger, should *for-ever* burn in it, without consuming?

This is undoubtedly that *unquenchable, everlasting fire* which God so often speaks of by the mouth of his Divine Son, who has left us such repeated assurances of the *eternity* of *punishments* reserved for the *wicked*, as render the disbelief of it absolutely inexcusable. In the third chapter of St. *Matthew*^b, speaking parabolically of the *wicked*, he tells us, that *every tree which bringeth not good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire*. And two verses lower, comparing their *punishments* with the rewards of the *good*, he declares them to be EVERLASTING; ^c *He will gather his wheat into the garner, but he will burn up the chaff with UNQUENCHABLE fire*. The very same phrase is literally repeated by St. *Luke*^d. And to shew how much more dreadful that *fire* is, from the consideration of *eternity*, than any mere *temporal* smart, he compares it with some of the most acute pains human nature can be subjected to in this life, as may be seen in the eighteenth of St. *Matthew*^e, but more fully in St. *Mark*^f; *If thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed,*

^a Chap. xvii. ^b Ver. 10. ^c Ver. 12. ^d Ch. iii. Ver. 17.
^e Ver. 8, 9. ^f Ch. ix. from ver. 43 to 49.

than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that NEVER SHALL BE QUENCHED: where their worm DIETH NOT and the fire IS NOT QUENCHED. And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that NEVER SHALL BE QUENCHED: where their worm DIETH NOT, and the fire IS NOT QUENCHED. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell-fire: where their worm DIETH NOT, and the fire IS NOT QUENCHED. For every one shall be SALTED WITH FIRE. The repetitions of the *unquench'd unquenchable fire*, and of the worm which *dies not*, are plain indications of the *eternity* of those *punishments*: a consideration which must make the cutting off a limb, or plucking out an eye, or any other of the acutest pains of this life, fall infinitely short of those which the reprobate hereafter shall endure in that *unquenchable fire*; which, as our Saviour metaphorically expresses it, instead of consuming them, and putting thus an end to their misery, shall *for-ever* preserve them to feel it's rigour, as salt is to meat a preservative from corruption or decay.

In the third of St. Mark ^a, the same Divine Oracle assures us, that *He that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of ETERNAL DAMNATION.* If he *hath never forgiveness*, how shall he *ever* be happy with God? Or how shall an immortalized being *ever* be happy with God, and yet not be *for-ever* miserable without him? If the unmerciful pleaders for unjust mercy should answer, that he, who is only *in danger of eternal damnation*, cannot be actually in it, and therefore as the greatest of crimes is threaten'd only with the *danger*, the *reality* cannot be any one's lot; let me beg leave to reply, that, if there is a *danger of*

^a Ver. 29.

eternal damnation, there must also be an *eternal damnation in fact*, since it is impossible to be in danger of what will *never* be.

In the Gospel of St. Luke ^a, our Saviour makes Abraham tell the rich man in hell, *between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that they which would pass hence to you, cannot; neither can they pass to us who would come from thence.* If the wicked then never can pass the gulph fix'd between them and the Good, nor receive any consoling visits from them, must they not remain *eternally* in their misery, spite of all their vain efforts and wishes? Again,

In the thirteenth of St. Matthew ^b Christ expressly compares the *wicked* to the *bad fish*, which, after the *good* are put up into vessels, are thrown away. So adds he --- *the angels shall sever the wicked; that is, throw them away like bad fish, not laid aside to be made use of after, but thrown away for-ever.* This is the plain sense of the text, as will appear from the words at length: *The kingdom of heaven is like unto a net that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind, which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away; so shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*

Agreeable to this are the words of St. Paul ^c, *To you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord JESUS shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not GOD, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord JESUS CHRIST, who shall be punished with EVERLASTING DESTRUCTION FROM THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD, and from the glory of his power.*

^a Ch. xvi. 26.

^b From ver. 47 to 50.

^c 2 Thess. i. from

7 to 9.

In St. *John*^a, Christ not only confirms this, but tells us, that the time of this vengeance is nigh at hand, and that none of the wicked shall escape it; *The hour is coming*, says he, *in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth, they that have done good unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation.* Now, must it not be own'd that both good and bad rise alike to immortality? Or, can it be denied, that the resurrection of the Good is to eternal life? This the declaimers against the Eternity of Hell-Torments do not pretend to: Why then shall not the resurrection of the bad be to eternal damnation? How else is this the last Judgment?

But our blessed Saviour, to put this matter past all dispute, has given us, in St. *Matthew*^b, the very sentences which shall be pronounced on the Good and the bad: *Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, COME, YE BLESSED OF MY FATHER, INHERIT THE KINGDOM PREPARED FOR YOU FROM THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD.* ^c*Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand; DEPART FROM ME, YE CURSED, INTO EVERLASTING FIRE, PREPARED FOR THE DEVIL AND HIS ANGELS. And these shall go into EVERLASTING punishment, but the righteous into life ETERNAL.* Whence appears, that the punishments reserved for the wicked, will have the very same duration as the rewards prepared for the Good, which most of our adversaries themselves own to be eternal in the strictest sense of the word.

Farther, St. *Jude*^d puts the reprobate upon the same footing, after the general judgment, with the DEVILS: *And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in EVERLASTING chains under darkness, unto the judgment of*

^a Ch. v. ver. 28, 29. ^b ch. xxv. ver. 34. ^c ver. 41, 42.
^d ver. 6, 7.

the great day. Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them, in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of ETERNAL fire. Now the exclusion of the devils from the first state must be *eternal*; mankind having been created to fill their vacant seats. As therefore, in the day of judgment, those vacant seats will be completely filled, where shall these fallen angels find room to hope for admittance? And, if the devils are to suffer *eternally*, how shall those wretches, who are upon the same footing, escape the like fate? It is for this reason St. Peter^a calls them *wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest, to whom the mist of darkness is reserved FOR-EVER.* And St. Jude^b; *Wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness FOR-EVER.*

So express are the holy Scriptures, both Old and New! Nothing then but wilful obstinacy and infidelity can make those who admit their authority, call the *Eternity of Hell-Torments* in question. I might quote innumerable other texts as plain as these I have alledged; but I think these more than sufficient to prove this doctrine irrefragable. However, I shall add one more from the Revelations of St. John^c, who, after speaking of the temporal judgment of God on the wicked, adds, *and the devil that deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and SHALL BE TORMENTED day and night FOR-EVER AND EVER.* Where it is very remarkable, that the Apostle makes use of the very same emphatic words *for-ever and ever*, to express the duration of the *punishments* of those unhappy Beings, as he afterwards applies to express the duration of the *felicity* prepared for the *Blessed*, of whom, he says, that *they shall reign FOR-EVER AND EVER.* From all

^a 2 Chap. xi. ver. 17.

^b ver. 13.

^c ch. xx. 10.

which

which it is self-evident, that as the *Resurrection* of the *Good* which our Saviour speaks of in the Gospel of this sacred writer above-quoted, is a *Resurrection* to *Life eternal*, so shall the *resurrection* of the *wicked* be a *resurrection* to *eternal damnation*.

And however it may seem severe to such as are but little disposed to avoid the consequence of this sentence, our Saviour fully clears his mercy in the sequel of this chapter; *I can of my ownself do nothing*, says he; *as I hear I judge: and my judgment is just*. That is, as GOD, I cannot do any thing unmerciful or unjust. The sentence I pass must be according to what I hear. In rewarding the *Good* with *eternal Life*, *my judgment is just*; and in punishing the *wicked* with *eternal damnation*, *my judgment is still just*; and to me belongeth mercy in both; FOR I render to every man according to his work.

May I not then conclude this part of my discourse with St. Paul, in the third to the *Romans*, *Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest; for wherein thou judgest GOD, thou condemnest thyself. And thinkest thou this, O man, that thou shalt escape the judgment of GOD! Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance, and long-suffering, not knowing that the goodness of GOD leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasurest up unto thyself wrath unto the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of GOD, who will render to every man according to his deeds.*

Thus far, Christians, I have given you sufficient evidence, I hope, from the Prophets, Apostles, and Christ himself, to reconcile the justice and mercy of GOD in inflicting *eternal Torments* on the wicked; which I have not only taken in the sense they are understood in by the fathers of all ages, but according to the natural import of the words. But what can scripture avail to convince men, who are ready, perhaps, to give up the very scriptures, and

and Christ himself, rather than believe those Torments to be *eternal*, which they are but too conscious of having incurr'd ? Let us then proceed to the next point, and,

II. Shew the conformity of this Doctrin with Right Reason, from the nature of the *Infinite Offended*, and of the *finite Offender*.

The soul of man, in this mortal state, is so miserably immersed in matter, flesh, and body, that it is almost incapable of conceiving any thought but what is, in some measure, more or less carnal, and partaking of matter. Hence it is, with the utmost difficulty, that the mind soars to any ideas, the least abstracted from matter, or from what is analagous to, and bears a proportion with matter and flesh. Nevertheless, we can never be able to form any notions worthy the Divine Being, without abstracting and purifying them from all matter and from all comparison with what is created. To our weakness, in this particular, may be attributed all the gross and mistaken ideas we form of God and his Divine Attributes. And this is the rock on which have splitten those grossly mistaken men, who, to prove God merciful in the sense they would have him so, attempt nothing less than to make him unjust. Unable to soar to the comprehension of what he is, they would fain lower him to what they are. Men are sometimes just, but then their justice is rigour, severity, and tainted with cruelty ; they are at other times merciful too, but then their mercy is fellow-feeling, softness, and conscious weakness. The one flows from a mixture of fear and self-preservation ; the other from a mixture of fear, and of love of ease : They do justice not to be oppressed by the injustice they fear ; and they shew mercy thro' fear of incurring the misery they see be-

fore them, and are conscious of being liable to, from the uneasiness they feel at the sight of it. In short, their justice is the strut of fancied strength, and their mercy the abortion of real weakness. They are never merciful and just together ; for as their justice and mercy flow from different principles, when they are merciful, it is by relaxing from the strictness of justice ; and when they are strictly just, it is by stifling the yearnings of mercy. 'Tis by this rule the declaimers against the eternal punishments of the wicked, pretend to measure justice and mercy of God. They have no other ideas of either than the unworthy ones they form from a vile comparison of them with their own. For want of giving themselves the trouble to soar above their corrupt imaginations, they have no other epithets to give the Divine Justice than severe, revengeful, dire, cruel, &c. and no other terms to express his Mercy by, than pity and compassion : As if God could not be just without being cruel, or taking a pleasure in punishing us, and could not be merciful without compassioning or feeling, and sharing with us in our miseries. What an unworthy idea for creatures to entertain of the Creator !

No, God is just, and he is merciful ; but he is neither cruel nor compassionate in the real meaning of those words : He neither is capable of enjoying any cruel pleasure in seeing his creatures miserable, nor of feeling the miseries they endure. His anger consists not, like ours, in any disorderly tumult within him ; his wrath is only such an essential aversion to evil, as requires the removal of the evil from his presence : And his mercy is no sensation of the sufferings he relieves, but an absolute communication of his goodness in the relief. In a word, he is not just, thro' the fear of injustice, or merciful thro' any yieldingness of his nature to sympathised misery ; but he is both just and merciful,

ful, because it is consistent with the immutable truth of his Divine Nature to be so.

Hence appears the essential difference between the justice and mercy of creatures, and the Justice and Mercy of God. Created justice and mercy proceed from different causes, have different objects, and pursue different ends; and therefore may exist separate: But the Justice and Mercy of God issue from the same immutable truth, have immutable truth for their end, and immutable truth for their object, as well in the felicity bestow'd on the Good, as in the misery inflicted on the wicked; and therefore God cannot be just without being merciful, and cannot be merciful without being just. It is immutably true, that the Good, in virtue of God's merciful promise, deserve the glory they are crown'd with; then it is immutable truth in God that makes him merciful and just in bestowing that glory. So it is unalterably true, that the wicked claim and merit the punishments which God inflicts on them, inasmuch as they refuse those mercifully promised rewards, and chuse the punishments which he mercifully threaten'd them with, to deter them from wickedness; therefore God's unalterable truth, makes him just and merciful in giving them the punishments they have chosen. Now it is inconsistent with this immutable truth, that God should ever be good, or *just and merciful*, only by halves, and not render to every one to the full extent of his desert; therefore it is immutably true, that God must inflict *eternal* punishments on the reprobate, because their wickedness deserves that the punishment they have chosen, preferably to the rewards they might have chosen, should be *eternal*.

Every offence is measured by the malice of the offender, and the greatness of the person offended. An insult done to an equal is a crime, but becomes
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an outrage when done to a master, adds rebellion in a child to his parent, and is high treason from a subject to his sovereign. It must therefore be infinite when offer'd to an Infinite Being. However, for this to be true, there must be malice in the person from whom the insult comes; and to have malice he must be in possession of reason and free-will in an actual power of choice. Wherefore a child, and a changling, are incapable of having malice in the true sense of the word; because, tho' they have a will, they have not reason to direct it. In like manner, a man who is perfectly *compos* is incapable of malice in an act he is irresistibly forced to; and therefore shou'd a man in his senses, falling from the top of a house, kill his father, or his sovereign, he is not guilty of parricide, or regicide, because not in possession of choice: But a man perfectly possess'd of sense and at liberty, cannot commit an offence without guilt; because the possession he is in of his reason and free-will, prove his assent to the evil, and therefore argue a malice in him proportion'd to the nature of the offence. As therefore the wicked must be supposed to be intelligent free agents, otherwise they cou'd not be wicked, they must be guilty of an infinite malice in the crimes they commit against God.

Nor will it avail, to extenuate their malice, to say, that God is impassible by nature, and therefore incapable of receiving any real injury from the crimes of the wicked. It is true that God cannot be destroy'd: but are any attempts to destroy him less criminal for that? God is so essentially truth and goodness, that were he not immutable, falsity and wickedness must destroy him? That therefore he is not destroy'd, there are no thanks due to the false and the wicked, but to his Divine Immutability. Shou'd a man squir a stone at a glass, and the glass not break; wou'd any thanks be due to
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the flinger? He did his utmost, the stone by it's nature was sufficiently opposed to the glass to shatter it; and that it did not, is not owing to the man who squirr'd it, but to the resistibility of the glass. So, if I may be allow'd to compare little things with great, the prophane with the sacred, and the finite with the infinite; that God cannot suffer any real injury in his own Divine Person, all the thanks and glory is due to the Immutability of his nature; but the malice of the man, who attempts to injure or insult him, is still the same; and nothing can extenuate the infinite malice of it. For tho' a man, as a finite limited being, is incapable of producing any physical effect infinite in itself; yet all his actions consider'd as moral, being specified by the object they terminate in, every offence against God which destroys his grace, may and must assume an infinite guilt, because it is an insult to an Infinite Being.

Now as it appears that God is essentially just, he must essentially require an infinite satisfaction for an infinite offence done to him. And this infinite satisfaction can be given him no other way than by the offender himself, or by the infinite merits of the mediation of Christ. Once therefore the wicked refuse that mediation by dying in their sin, they have no means of making that infinite satisfaction, but by an infinite punishment suffer'd in their own persons. And as the finiteness of their own nature renders them incapable of suffering a punishment infinite in the bulk, that punishment must be infinite in point of duration, and consequently *eternal*. Again, those very punishments they suffer are something created, and therefore cannot be infinite in any other sense than the infinity of their duration. Thus then it appears upon the whole, that if we consider the nature of the *Infinite Offended*, of the *finite Offender*, and of the *satisfaction*

faction due to the *Former* from the *Latter*, the *Torments* of the wicked must be *eternal*.

To reconcile this Infinite Justice in God with the Infinity of his Mercy, it will suffice to reflect, that the Infinite Mercy of God, places before the wicked *eternal* happiness, or misery; gives them power, means and aid to chuse the former; and often, even after their chusing the latter, offers them the mediation of his holy son for a satisfaction of the infinite offence they commit in chusing the latter: and is slow in anger, to give them the sufficient time (and more than sufficient) to accept it. If then they reject all this, and prefer an infinity of torments to an *eternal* felicity, and their own future miserable satisfaction for their crimes to the saving present satisfaction of Christ; is it not mercy as well as justice in God, to reward them with their own option? What greater mercy can a merciful judge shew, than to give a criminal the choice of his own sentence? God therefore is infinitely merciful at the same time he is inflexibly just, in rewarding the wicked with those infinite punishments which they inflexibly chuse, earn, and prefer to infinite felicity. To this, if we add the enhancement of felicity which the Good receive from the comparison of their *eternal* happiness, with the *eternal* misery of these wretches, we must be lost to all grace and shame if we do not glorify God, and acknowledge him to be equally merciful and just in inflicting *eternal* Torments on the wicked, convinced with the royal Psalmist: that *unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy: FOR thou renderest to every man according to his work.*

But some men are not to be convinced. Their wishes, or their fears, stand them in the stead of conviction, every fallacy of their weak understanding is with them a demonstration, and the texts of Scripture they least comprehend are the
most

most irrefragable authorities they have to build upon. However, that they may have no room to plead ignorance as an excuse for their obstinacy,

III. I shall answer the most important objections which can be offer'd against this fundamental point of faith ; and conclude the whole with some moral reflections.

Let us represent God to ourselves, antecedent to the creation, designing to form intelligent Beings. What cou'd we presume concerning the state of such Beings, to be produced, and to issue from the all-powerful hands of a Creator perfectly happy in himself, but that they likewise shou'd be made as happy as their finite capacities would admit them to be? For what other end cou'd a self-sufficing, independent Being, incapable of receiving any addition to his own felicity, have, in forming creatures to his own likeness, than that of making them as happy as they cou'd be? Thus set out our modern Sticklers against the *eternity* of Hell-Torments; and thus will I fairly start with them, to examin what can be inferr'd from this supposition? Why truly, *say they*, there is no place for any thing but benevolence and happiness. The pure and perfect God cannot possibly do any thing but what is so. True, and what then? Is not justice and punishment, when due, equally good with benevolence and happiness, where merited? The pure and perfect God then is equally good in punishing with justice, as in rewarding with mercy.

To return then to the creation.---If we suppose, as indeed we ought, that God from all *Eternity* decree'd the creation of intelligent Beings, to enjoy *eternal* happiness in as ample a manner as their nature wou'd admit of; we must suppose that he

decree'd them to be perfectly free ; *first*, because nothing can be perfectly happy without perfect liberty ; and, *secondly*, because without perfect liberty they cou'd not have purchased that *eternal* happiness, nor possess it in their own right ; a condition without which their happiness wou'd have been but half-happiness, since no felicity we hold as a mere unmerited gift, is equal to that which we possess in some measure in our right. In consequence then of God's designing his intelligent creatures to be as happy as they cou'd be, it was necessary he shou'd decree them to be created in such a state as might enable them to possess their happiness in their own right, by purchasing it. Now mankind being but creatures at the best, and of finite capacities, cou'd not possibly be in a state of purchasing infinite felicity in the most perfect manner, but by God's laying them under restrictions, and promising them that felicity as a reward for complying with them. And if the promise of rewarding their compliance with infinite felicity, cou'd be any inducement to them to obey him, the threat of punishing their disobedience with infinite misery must add a farther inducement to their compliance. This necessarily implies, that men must be created free-agents, and absolutely able and provided with means to obey, or disobey, the commands God laid upon them. For whatever is not perfectly free and able to act, or not act, cannot merit reward, or punishment, for obeying, or disobeying. To prove then that the decree of *eternal* punishments is no ways derogatory from, but, on the contrary, an ineffable effect of God's infinite goodness, it will be sufficient to reflect, that God created man to be eternally happy in his own right, and to avoid *eternal* misery, if he so pleases, and created him in a state, and with means, suited to that purpose.

But

But why did not God create man incapable of disobeying him, and consequently deserving *eternal* punishment? Wou'd not that have been more consistent with infinite bounty and benevolence? I answer, no, for the reason above assign'd. Man cou'd not be compleatly happy, without being so, in some measure, by his own right, in virtue of God's promise: he could not merit happiness, in virtue of that promise, in so compleat a manner as he now can, without a free-will to obey, or disobey, God's commands; and therefore it was more consistent with God's infinite goodness and benevolence to create him free to good and evil. For tho' the liberty, essential to absolute merit, be merely that of *acting*, or *not acting*, and not that of *doing good*, or *evil*; yet the consideration of liberty to do *good*, or *evil*, must greatly enhance the merit of such mere men as, being free to both, reject the latter, and make choice of the former, in obedience to the grace given by God to direct them in their choice. Notwithstanding which, Christ most perfectly merited, in the strictest sense, tho' he could not sin. For in the instant of his Incarnation he was establish'd in sanctity by that Divine *Hypostasis* under which both his Natures subsisted. And as his Divine Nature, thus divinely subsisted, was *eternally* and *naturally* entitled to that immense Self-happiness which, from all *eternity*, it enjoys; so his Human Nature, from the instant of his Incarnation, in virtue of that *hypostatical* union, became *eminently* entitled to possess in the most perfect manner possible, by possessing, in it's own right, the fulness of bliss it now enjoys to all *eternity*. And therefore a liberty to evil was so far from being requisite in Christ to merit, that it could not even have enhanced his merit, or, in the least, added to the *eminent* right he had to glory. Nay, such a liberty was incompatible with

his Nature, consider'd in it's *hypostatical* circumstance : for thus consider'd, his Will and the Divine Will were in an unalterable conformity ; and therefore tho' Christ had the liberty of *not acting*, if he had so pleas'd, what he positively did act ; yet if he had chosen *not to act*, his *not acting* wou'd have been equally from a principle of goodness, because it wou'd have proceeded from the conformity of his Human Will to that of his Divinity ; but, with regard to mere man, the case is quite different. There is not that intimate conformity between his and God's will ; and tho' consider'd abstractedly he might absolutely merit without a liberty of *contrariety*, as the divines call it, *that is*, without being free to good, or evil ; the liberty of *contradiction*, that is, the liberty to *act*, or *not act*, being alone essential to merit in itself. Nevertheless, if we consider man under the present dispensation, and subject to the positive law of God, it was absolutely necessary for him to merit, that he shou'd have a liberty of *contrariety*, or a liberty to *good or evil* ; not because this condition is essential to *liberty in itself*, but because a creature, subject to God's positive law, when bid to *act*, cou'd not abstain from acting, without disobeying the command of God, and consequently doing *evil* ; and therefore cou'd not be free to *act*, or *not act*, without a concomitant liberty to *obey*, or *disobey*, that is, without being free at the same time to *good or evil*.

Neither does this liberty imply any essential weakness and frailty in which men were created. No : God created them strong and upright, placed *eternal life* and *eternal death* before them ; and that they might enjoy the former in their own right by virtue of his promise, he enter'd into a covenant with them, gave them a free-will to fulfil or break their part of the covenant ; and to attract them to the choice of the former, he gave them

a sufficient portion of grace to determin their free-will. It was then the perfection of infinite mercy in God, when he decree'd the creation of a free-agent, to decree, from the same *eternal* period, a sufficient portion of grace and means to guide him to an advantageous choice of the ample happiness he was design'd for, and as a double inducement to him to make use of that grace, and those means, to decree an *eternity* of bliss to the proper application of them, and an *eternity* of torments to his abuse of them. And if mankind, in defiance of that mercy, will neither be enticed to *eternal* happiness by *eternal* promises, nor deterr'd from *eternal* misery by *eternal* threats; must God therefore be deem'd less merciful for being just? Or must he derogate from *eternal* Truth and justice, to favour criminals, who have voluntarily renounced all mercy for-ever, by voluntarily persisting in offences which *eternal* truth has stamp'd with *eternal* reprobation?

Yes, truly, if we believe the declaimers against God's *eternal* justice. "For, *say they*, the *eternity* of " Hell-Torments destroys itself by it's own strength, " gives the lye to the voice of universal nature, of " conscience, and even common-sense: all which " unanimously conspire to bear witness to the in- " finite goodness of God." But this is engaging with a Phantom: where is the wretch that denies the infinite goodness of God? Or how does that infinite goodness contradict the *eternity* of Hell-Torments? Why truly, *say they*, " boundless benignity, as that of God is, can never cease to do " good to every creature, as far as it is capable of " receiving it." Very good: who denies all this? But must the sweet effects of his goodness therefore extend to those wretches who are incapable of receiving it? Has it not already been clearly proved, that the *inflexibly wicked* have voluntarily put themselves

themselves out of the reach of mercy, by preferring the *eternal* threats of *eternal* misery, to the repeated opportunities and offers of infinite happiness? And must the infinite justice of God, which requires an *eternal* satisfaction for an infinite offence, never take place, but always submit to the infinite malice of an offender, who dares his justice, and contemns his mercy? Shocking illusion!

“ But how then can the Divine Goodness be vindicated, in many instances, which are of a nature undeniably evil, and which we, to our own sad misfortune feel; particularly his suffering man to fall into that direful condition, into which he precipitated soon after his creation?” This our adversaries themselves answer, by refunding all in the unsearchable goodness of God. This matter, they allow, may be placed in a light, where it will be easy to see, that *Adam*, freely deviating from the felicity he was placed in, could not but fall into evil; and that, having done so, it was but right, man’s condition should have a tincture of the choice he had made: And so that what we call justice, and they call severity, is but the natural effect of the bad disposition he has more or less freely contracted. This issue, say they, could not be prevented, without inverting the order of things, (*that is*, as they must mean, *man’s free-will*) which is inconsistent with the Divine Goodness, and might possibly have been a greater disadvantage to mankind, than any thing they have now to complain of.

Our adversaries will, by no means, have it consistent with the Divine Goodness to invert the order of things, as far as it may relate to man’s free-will; because they are parties concern’d in it themselves, and are sensible what a miserable state they must be in, was that order inverted, and man divested of liberty to good and evil. But, because they are loth to submit to the ill consequences of their abusing

sing and misapplying that free-will, they wou'd fain have God give up the infinite satisfaction due to him for infinite offences, however inconsistent it be for his Divine Goodness, to invert the order of his justice and truth. Such are the gross inconsistencies attending on error and ignorance !

However, to remove this absurdity out of sight, they think it sufficient to say, that " What the Divine Goodness never fails in is, the setting all engines to work for repairing the damage man has done himself." This is strictly true ; and so true that he spared not his only-begotten Son, but sacrificed him to the same ineffable purpose. Yet, as this was done without inverting the order of things, and consequently, without the least infringement upon man's free-will, man is still left at liberty to make use of, or to reject those means of reparation as he pleases ; and, in consequence of that liberty, may either merit, by grace, the good effects of that reparation, or must incur the *eternal* punishments due to his obstinacy in resisting those engines which God set to work for that reparation : and it is inconsistent with the order of God's goodness and justice, not to reward or punish him accordingly, for the one or the other.

But, according to these false reasoners, *the reparation*, which the Divine Goodness does, and must set all engines to work for, *is nothing less than a general restoration of all mankind*. So that, according to them, man must be absolutely free to serve or slight his Maker ; and the Almighty Maker, in virtue of his promise, must be (as he is *eternal* Truth) under an absolute obligation of rewarding the *Good* with *eternal* rewards for his service, and (tho' he is infinite Truth) must be absolutely bound to make it up with the *wicked*, by a general restoration, notwithstanding their having wilfully and obstinately offended him, in spite of his threatening them with
eternal

eternal Torments. Is there any consistency in this? Is there either religion, equity, or even common-sense in it? Is not this pulling God from his throne to raise man, wretched man, to a more absolute state of freedom than his Maker? Man must be infinitely rewarded for finite, useless services: God must not be infinitely satisfied for infinite insults. Oh, how true is it, that *the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel!*

Yet the sticklers against Divine Justice are not contented with stopping here: *One abyss calls-on another*; and they have no other refuge from the former absurdity, than by running into a worse. They pretend to vindicate this self-contradicting doctrine, by recurring to *the purpose of the Creator to render all men happy*. This intention of the Almighty, say they, it is certain, must some time take place; and since it obviously does not in this life, it evidently follows, that *it's accomplishment is reserved for that to come*. I might answer this objection, with observing, that the wicked are generally happy in this life; they have their reward, as our Saviour says; and as their wickedness intitles them to no farther reward, they have no room to expect any happiness in the next life. But let us see to what length they carry their absurdity. Truly, they say, *Man being miserable from his very birth, and even in the womb of his mother, goodness, or indeed justice, requires that the happiness he was made to enjoy, should infallably be some time his portion*. Nay, we may even presume, that boundless goodness will make their transient state of evil, an enhancement of their final good: so that by the experience of pain, they will be susceptible of more exquisite pleasure than they cou'd have been without tasting of it. Such are the preposterous lengths to which error leads a man, who is weak enough to be hood-wink'd by it! If this were the case, who would not chuse to be wicked? For, does not this system place the wicked

wicked upon a much better footing than the most faithful of God's good servants? The wicked are to engross all the pleasure and prosperity in this life, as it is undeniable matter of fact that they generally do; they may rebel against the laws of God, and their reward is to be certain *transient* Torments, which shall enhance their *eternal* felicity; while, on the contrary, the Good are to suffer all manner of ills in this life, and when they have faithfully obey'd the will of God, they are to be punish'd with a degree of happiness, inferior to that of the wicked, for want of it's being enhanced by the like Torments, to those which the wicked transiently suffer'd. I call the *transient* Torments of the wicked a reward: for, in such case, they wou'd be so, inasmuch as they wou'd be the means of enhancement of *eternal* felicity; as the felicity of the Good cou'd not but be a punishment, when compared to the greater felicity they had unjustly lost. I say *unjustly*; for sure the *eternal* felicity of the Good ought rather to receive an enhancement than that of the wicked. Hence, I hope, it appears sufficiently, what a motley attribute our adversaries endeavour to make the Divine Goodness, by excluding from it the essential considerations of his justice and truth. How absurd then must this notion of God's goodness appear, and how opposite to that of *David*, when he cry'd out; *Unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy; FOR thou render'st to every man according to his work.*

But, to answer this objection more directly, let us recall their own principles. *The purpose of the Creator, to render all men happy*, cou'd not tend to *invert the order of things*, that being, according to their own system, *inconsistent with Divine Goodness*. As therefore this purpose of God no ways infringes upon man's *free-will*, man could not be made happy without *willing* to be so. God's purpose there-

fore of making all men happy by their free-will, leaves them perfectly free to be happy if they will, but cannot force them to be so, without inverting the order of things. And therefore God's purpose of making free-agents happy, is no ways frustrated by some free-agents never being happy ; because it was equally his purpose that they should be free to be happy or miserable, as they pleased : So that his intention always takes place in this world as well as in the next, inasmuch as he intended, that if they persevered in willing to be happy, they should be so *eternally* ; and if they inflexibly will'd to be miserable, they shou'd *eternally* be so.

But to extricate themselves from this invincible chain of truths, they ask, *Would it not be worthier of Immense Goodness, to exempt man from all manner of punishment after this life, since he was form'd for blis ?* Here they attempt to answer themselves. *All the perplexity of this argument, say they, arises from the narrowness of our own understandings. It amounts to this ; Why did God make man a free-agent ? for a confined liberty, is no liberty.* And may not this answer be retorted on themselves ? Wou'd it not be worthier of Immense Goodness, not to suffer man to be *eternally* miserable, who was form'd for *eternal* blis ? No, it wou'd not. Why did God make man a free-agent, but that he might be compleatly happy to all *Eternity*, by meriting so to be ? And to do this, must he not be free to do works worthy *eternal* life ? But how cou'd he be free to do the good commanded, without being free to deviate from it, and so do evil ; *for a confined liberty is no liberty ?* And is not the consequence plain, that, if man making use of his free-will to obey the will of God merits, in virtue of this Divine Promise, *eternal* felicity, he should, in like manner, deserve *eternal* misery, in virtue of this Divine Threat, when he wilfully persists in disobeying him ?

But

But the sticklers against the *Eternity* of Hell-Torments, think to elude the strength of these truths by quibbling about the terms those threats are express'd in. *The terms NEVER, EVER, EVERLASTING, ETERNAL, say they, are plainly equivocal, of various significations, and frequently denote no more than a very long or indeterminate duration.* This is very true : but what then ? *Why there is no necessity therefore, say these wise reasoners, from their genuine import, to take them in a rigid and unlimited acceptation, in those places where they are made use of to figure out the punishments of the wicked.* Let us then see what appearance of reason there is for so voluntary and bold an assertion. In the *first* place then, I answer, that the doctrine of the *Eternity* of Hell-Torments, is not merely built upon these and the like terms in Holy Writ, but on the necessary connection of justice and truth, with mercy in God ; on the infinity of his nature, of man's malice, of the satisfaction due to the former from the latter ; and on the insufficiency of man to pay that infinite satisfaction by any other means after death, than by the infinite duration of that satisfaction ; all which demonstrably prove the necessity of Hell-Torments being *eternal*. Wherefore, whether those terms be equivocal or univocal ; whether they had been in Holy Writ or not ; it would still be unalterably true, that the infinite malice of the wicked against an Infinite Being, must be atoned for by a satisfaction infinite in point of duration, when the finite nature of the offender would not admit of a satisfaction infinite in the bulk, which is the case of the wicked after death.

In the *next* place, tho', where the sacred scripture speaks of things in their nature temporal, and of transactions of this life, the terms NEVER, EVER, EVERLASTING, ETERNAL, and the like, are, and must be taken in a less rigorous sense than the na-

tural import of them implies, and can mean no more than *a very long or indeterminate duration*; because *Eternity* cannot be brought within the compass of time. Yet, with regard to the future punishments of the wicked, they can be taken in no other than the rigorous and natural sense of them: For this reason, the chief torments of the wicked will not begin till the end of the world, when their bodies and souls shall be united, to partake the reward they jointly contributed to deserve. *In the end of the world*, says Christ, *Mat. xiii. The angels shall—sever the wicked from among the just.* In the day of judgment, *THE LAST DAY*, when *time shall be no more*, Christ tells us, *Mat. xviii.* that he will say to the wicked, *Go, ye cursed, into EVERLASTING fire.* What other sense then can *everlasting* be here taken in than the rigorous and natural one. Can *everlasting* mean no more than a very long and indeterminate duration, when spoken at a period when time is at an end and at the point of being abforb'd in eternity, *in the twinkling of an eye*? Besides, is not this confessedly the *last* Judgment? How then can the *everlasting* Torments the criminals are condemn'd to be revoked by any judgment posterior to it? Can the *last* sentence suffer an appeal? If so; it is the *last* and not the *last*. An absurdity too great to need any confutation. The hapless wretches are entering upon the verge of *Eternity* loaded with their sentence of *everlasting* misery, and time, in the instant of it's destruction; what other duration then have they to expect their miseries to be measured by than that of *Eternity*; whether can they appeal from the *last* sentence, to be past upon them; or how can their *everlasting* misery be revoked, without a fresh sentence, which, after the *LAST*, there is no room for?

Again, *St. John*, in the *Revelations*, chap. xx. tells us, that the devil, the beast, and the false prophet, shall be tormented in the lake of fire and
brimstone

brimstone *for-ever and ever*; the very same expression which he makes use of in the last chapter to express the duration of the felicity of the good, they shall regn *for-ever and ever*. St. John makes no difference between the duration of the *felicity* of the good, and the misery of the *wicked*. The expressions are equally strong, nay, the very same, and can be wrested to no other than the rigorous and natural sense of them. From all which it evidently appears, that the *abovemention'd terms must be taken in their rigid and unlimited acceptation in those places, where they are made use of to figure out the future punishments of the wicked* *.

But these enemies to Divine Justice and Truth, unwilling barefacedly to deny the invincible evidence of sacred Scripture, attempt to wrest it to their own purpose, and pretend to produce many texts capable of destroying the genuin sense of those we have alledged. *First*, our Saviour Christ is said, in the *Acts of the Apostles*, ch. iii. 21. *to come to restore all things*. Then, say they, a general restoration of All, *Good and Wicked*, must and will be brought about. This I have already answer'd in what I have said to the allegation of God's creating *all* to be happy. For tho' Christ *came to restore ALL*, let it still be remember'd, that he came not to invert the order of things, nor, consequently, to destroy man's free-will; and, therefore, tho' his general design and end was the restoration of *all*, yet it was to be a restoration of free-agents, and in course must include a liberty in those free-agents to benefit by his restoration or not. And thus his intention is no ways frustrated by such as reject his restoration.

But St. Paul expressly says, 1 Cor. xv. 22. *As in Adam ALL die, even so in Christ shall ALL be made alive*. Therefore, say our adversaries, *as it is past all*

* See the Preface, p. viii. for a farther answer to this objection.

dispute, that in Adam ALL die, it is no less certain, that in Christ ALL shall be made alive. But is it not plain, from the very words themselves, that the Apostle here compares not only the means, but the manner of using them. How did ALL die in *Adam*, but by the abuse of free-will? and can ALL be made alive in Christ in any other manner than by a right use of that free-will? The words of St. *Paul* then import no more than that as ALL, by free-will, died in *Adam*, their wills being eminently contain'd in his, so, even so (says the Apostle) *that is*, in the same manner, shall ALL be made alive in Christ by their free-will. But dare our adversaries advance, that Christ came to force men to life against their will; or dare they say that it is consistent with his infinite justice and truth, or, consequently, with his mercy, to redeem to life such as inflexibly persist in rejecting his redemption and mediation?

But, say our adversaries, *the words of the Apostle in the 26th verse of the same chapter, are a strong confirmation of this pretended restoration: THE LAST ENEMY THAT SHALL BE DESTROY'D IS DEATH.* *Is the separation of the soul from the body the death here design'd?* No, say they, *for after the coming of Christ, there shall be no more room for that.* A pretty reason to be assign'd by men in their senses! Because, after Christ's coming, which is the end of time, there shall be no more room for the separation of the soul from the body, therefore that separation cannot be the last enemy destroy'd.

To give a stronger instance of their wisdom, or rather weakness, these sticklers for a general restoration, alledge a farther proof of the death here mention'd not being temporal, *which is*, say they, *that the inspired writer ranks it among the enemies of God, whereas temporal death is really his servant.* But let me ask these sophisters, whether the death of the son of God could be call'd a friendship done him? And

is

is not the separation of soul and body still an enemy to God, while it debars his beloved elect of the full enjoyment of the bliss they are destin'd to? True indeed it is, that death is his servant, employ'd in executing his orders, so is the devil; but is either less opposite to the final end of his goodness? What egregious trifling then are our adversaries compell'd to have recourse to!

The 54th verse is a plain confutation of their misconstruction of this text, where the Apostle expressly says, that *when this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death shall be swallow'd up in victory.* Here the Apostle in plain terms tells us, that when immortality shall render the soul and body inseparable, then death, that is, that separation of soul and body shall cease. Yet these confident triflers are not ashamed to quote this very verse to prove that St. Paul does not mean by death the separation of soul and body. Was a child to reason in this manner; our adversaries themselves wou'd think a rod more proper than arguments to confute him.

But our adversaries lay great stress on the exclamation of St. Paul: *Oh death, where is thy sting? Oh grave, where is thy victory? If death and the grave, say they, have no other sting than sin, and this sting must be destroy'd, does it not thence follow, that hell, which depends altogether upon it, must be destroy'd also.* Who told our adversaries that sin will be destroy'd? Not the apostle: he only asks a question, which he himself has solved. Sin is pass'd into immortal subjects, who before were mortal, but now are immortalized, and their sin with them. Death consequently has lost it's sting in immortality, and therefore must cease. But does it therefore follow that sin must also? No, on the contrary, Sin is the perpetual worm of the wicked, which shall never die in their inflexible hearts, but when it is
separated

separated by a state of immortality from natural death, that death itself must die, and have no more dominion over them. Well then might the Apostle cry out, *Ob death! where is thy sting?*

Thus far I have answer'd these mistaken advocates for mercy, according to their own sense of the Apostle's words. But if they will allow us the liberty of understanding *Death* in a something more than literal sense, as it is a separation of the man from God, the fountain of all life, and not a meer separation of soul and body; it must be own'd, that the unhappy objects of Divine Wrath are *eternally* subject to a *second* more, infinitely more, dreadful *death*, the sting of which they must and will *perpetually* feel. However, as this does not seem to be the Apostle's meaning in the passage in question, where he is manifestly talking of *temporal death*, the *only death which cou'd lose it's STING*, and *which* he tells us received it's STING, *that is*, all it's power from SIN; it is plain, that the Apostle's sense must be that in which the soundest part of Divines and Interpreters have understood him; *to wit*, of those thrice happy Saints, who triumph over death by a glorious resurrection to immortal felicity. Neither can St. Paul's words be naturally applied to any other sense, as appears from what immediately precedes: *Death is swallow'd up in VICTORY*. Which is strictly true in those Blessed Souls: since in them *death* absolutely loses it's STING, *that is*, all the power it received from SIN; *that is*, in a word, the power of separating their bodies and souls, and keeping them from their ultimate perfect union in God. But what does all this infer against the *Eternity of Hell-Torments*?

Yet St. Paul is farther quoted in the *first* to the *Colossians*, ver. 20. where he declares the good pleasure of God, in sending his son into the world,
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to be, *that by him he might reconcile ALL things to himself.* But was this to be done by inverting the order of things, or by any infringement on man's free-will? No. This our adversaries own to be inconsistent with Divine Goodness, and therefore I shall content myself with the answer I have already given to the like kind of argument.

But the same Apostle, in the same chapter, calls Christ *the first-born of every creature, that in all things he might have the pre-eminence.* Very true, and is he not? No one denies him to have the same sovereign pre-eminence over the powers of hell, as over the Good, and the powers of heaven. What then? Must the wicked therefore be restored whether they will or no? Yes, say our triflers, because in the 16th verse it is said, that *all things that were made by him, were also created for him.* This is undoubted truth, but no ways concludes for our adversaries, unless they can prove that Christ is not glorified in his justice to the wicked, as well as in his bounty to the good, which they will find a difficult task to engage in. Christ, as I have already said, created ALL for his glory; and whether, by their free choice, they become eternally happy, or eternally wretched; as he provided ALL with means to enjoy felicity, he is equally to be glorified: *Inasmuch as unto him belongeth mercy; FOR he renders to every man according to his work.*

It is again urged, that Christ is the first fruits of the creation: *Now if the first fruits be holy, the lump also is holy; and if the root be holy, so are the branches,* says the Apostle in the xith to the Romans. I heartily wish these fond quoters of St. Paul wou'd be fair in their quotations: if they were, they wou'd quote the whole sense of him, and not stifle what destroys the tenet they mean to support. St. Paul here talks of the bulk and branches while they continue in the same perfection with the first fruits.

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But then he expressly tells us, that some branches are cut off. *Well, says the Apostle, because of unbelief they were broken off, but thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear: for if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but towards thee goodness, if thou continue in his goodness.* What is there in all this text to favour a general restoration of the wicked? St. Paul tells us that Christ, the first fruit, is holy, and the bulk and branches are the same, while they are like him. But then he tells us, that there are many branches, which, for want of that likeness, are cut off: he tells us (*Gentiles*) that we are ingrafted in their place; and while we persist in a likeness to him, we shall partake of his holiness: but bids us beware not to imitate those perverse natural branches, *the Jews*, who were cut off thro' unbelief. For that God is good, but then he is just too; and to them that use their free-will to fall, deals severity, as he does goodness to them who are free to persevere. Indeed, he afterwards tells us, that the Jews, *if they abide not in their unbelief, shall be grafted in again*; but they are left to their free-will to be ingrafted or not; and if they reject it, must they not be cut off for-ever?

No, say our obstinate adversaries, *Christ ask'd all the ends of the earth for his inheritance*, Psal. ii. *and why, but to reconcile them to God*? But let me ask them in turn. Did Christ ask to reconcile free-agents with prejudice to their freedom? No, they will answer me, this is inconsistent with Divine Goodness. Then they are already answer'd. For if free-agents, whom he pray'd and strove to reconcile, inflexibly withstand his reconciling mediation; can he, in justice, or mercy, force them to reconciliation? Such weak refuges are our adversaries reduced to.

Yet these obstinate enemies to God's justice, truth, and mercy, think they have another stronghold to retire to, in the *fifth* to the Romans, *where*, say they, *the words of the Apostle are very clear: As by one man's disobedience, many were made sinners; so, by the obedience of one man, many were made righteous.* The word *MANY*, in this place, continue they, *undoubtedly comprehends all mankind.* *ALL* were made sinners by Adam, therefore *ALL* ought to be made righteous by Jesus Christ. To this I answer, *first*, that it is false that *ALL* were made sinners by Adam, for Christ himself was not: *Secondly*, *ALL* are not to be made righteous in a different manner than they were made sinners. Wherefore, as they were not made sinners with prejudice to their free-will, they are not to be made righteous unless they please: and, consequently, as it is too sadly true, that many have not made use of their free-will to be made righteous by him; it is sadly as true, that *many* will not be made righteous by his obedience. *MANY* then cannot stand here for *ALL* *mankind*. And tho' all do not become righteous, Christ's good intention is not thereby frustrated, as he intended not to invert the order of things, or force the free-agency of man: nor will it be to their purpose to urge what the Apostle adds in the same chapter, that *where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.* For by this he meant no more than to display the riches and strength of God's grace, in opposition to the poverty and weakness of man's free-will. Man's will yielded, and let sin abound, notwithstanding that he met with no resistance, but what he had power to conquer: whereas the more abundant grace of Christ conquer'd the heart of man, notwithstanding the resistance of his free-will, *by moving him*, as St. *Augustin* says somewhere, *to do willingly what he had a free-will to do.*

Thus far I have answer'd, I hope, to the satisfaction of all unprejudiced minds, the most material objections that are or can be brought against the *eternity* of Hell - Torments; and exploded the false and dangerous doctrine of a general restoration. Heaven forbid I should be so cruel to conceive any pleasure in the reflection on the endless Torments of my fellow-creatures. No. Cou'd I, without injuring the justice, truth, and mercy of my Divine Maker, change their *eternal* punishment into a temporal one; I shou'd be as willing to do it as the most compassionate of my adversaries. But must the Divine Attributes be reason'd away, to make room for unmerited, unaccepted, nay, rejected compassion? Or will the asserting the Torments of Hell to be only temporal suffice to make them so?

GOD has expressly acquainted us, that when he takes away the impenitent with his stroke, a great ransom cannot deliver them; that he will judge them by the number of his years, that is, by his *eternity*; that the portion of their cup shall be fire and brimstone, an everlasting lake of fire and brimstone, which shall torment them for-ever and ever; that he will take them off into it in a whirlwind living in his wrath, and as living as his wrath, and the fire kindled therein; and lest in our infirmity we shou'd, with *David*, reflect on his mercy in so doing, he warns us not to lay too great a stress on his mercy alone, for that it is inseparable from his justice and truth. For tho' he is slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy, yet his truth endureth to all generations, and both shall go inseparably before his face; inasmuch as he is ever, and, in all respects, a just God, as well as a Saviour, and a false balance is as great an abomination to him, as a just weight is his delight. We are assured, that in the last day, when time shall

shall cease, and *eternity*, fathomless *eternity*, take place, he will come to judge the *Good* and *Bad*; that the former shall rise to the resurrection of life, the latter to the resurrection of damnation, and that his judgment will be just, when he shall say to the former, *Come, ye blessed, &c.* and to the latter, *Go, ye cursed, into everlasting fire.* A dreadful sentence this, and so much the more so, as it will be the last sentence, which consequently can admit of no appeal. Yet, all dreadful as it is, is not God to be glorified in it for the equity of his judgment? Yes, surely he is, and for his mercy too.

What more equitable, and at once merciful, than to render to every one according to his work! God most liberally, without any interest to himself, created man a free-agent, that he might be a sharer in his *eternal* felicity, and enjoy happiness in his own right, by purchasing it of God. And to help him forward to this end, enter'd into a gracious covenant with him, in virtue of which he might become entitled to the bliss he was created for. And to induce him to fulfil his part of the covenant, and thereby lay the Divine Goodness under an ineffable tie of mercy and justice to fulfil it's part, he promised *eternal* joy to his obedience, and threaten'd his disobedience with *eternal* woe; adding a sufficient portion of grace and means to win and allure his free-will to the better choice, and to wean it from preferring present precarious, empty, fleeting pleasure, to the future, certain, solid, and never-ending. What more cou'd a just God do? And what less cou'd he do as a merciful one, than leave the free-will of man, whom he had thus strengthen'd, uncontroul'd in it's choice? If then, after all this, man inflexibly persists in preferring *eternal* wretchedness to *eternal* happiness, is it not equally merciful to sentence him to what he prefers?

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But how much brighter still does this mercy appear, when we see the Divine Bounty affording him fresh means of revoking his choice, by sacrificing his only Son, and offering to accept his blood in mediation and atonement for the former obstinacy of man, in rejecting the Grace and means to Salvation he might have made use of, but rejected? What shall we say, when we see man obstinately bent to refuse this ineffable condescension? We must own, that his malice and perversity is an infinite insult to the infinite goodness of God, and that God shews himself a merciful Being in not controuling the obstinate wretch; and shews himself a just one, to require the infinite satisfaction due for the infinite insult committed against him. And since that infinite satisfaction can be paid no other way than by infinite duration, the consequence will be, that it behoves God, as a just and merciful Being, to decree the offender those *eternal* torments he has been pleased inflexibly to make choice of.

All the arguments brought to prove the contrary, tend only to destroy justice and truth in God, or free-will in man; both which being more than visible absurdities, carry their own confutation with them. And the texts of Scripture, wrested against the orthodox doctrine of the Eternity of Hell-Torments, are such as only serve to confirm the belief of it; they tend on one hand to justify the Divine Mercy in inflicting them, by pointing out the *patience of God*, and the *riches of his Goodness*, which leads the wicked to *repentance*, by *forbearance*, *long-suffering*, and offering them efficacious means of *reconciliation*; and, on the other hand, render the *wicked inexcusable in despising the riches of his Goodness*; and *after their hardness and impenitent hearts, treasuring up to themselves wrath unto the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to every man according to his deeds.*

Thus

And now, I presume, I have fully demonstrated the necessity of admitting the *Eternity* of Hell-Torments to be perfectly conformable, not only with the justice and truth, but even with the mercy of God ; and have proved the consistency of this doctrine by *Revelation* from scripture, according to the evident import of it's words ; by *Right Reason*, from the nature of the *Infinite Offended*, of the *finite offender*, and of the *infinite satisfaction* due to the *Former* from the *latter* ; and *finally*, by *both*, from the very objections that are made against it.

How long then, O perverse triflers, will ye persist in your error ? how long will ye shut the eyes of your understanding to the full-beaming rays of God's ineffable truth ? and how long will ye be *cruel* in the *false tenderness* of your mercies ? Will you, CHRISTIANS suffer the reasonableness of your faith to give way to the quibbles and absurdities of these enemies to truth and reason ? Can you answer it to your own consciences, to join such a feeble troop in the attempt of pulling God from his throne of judgment and justice, to set up the powers of vice in his stead, and give wickedness, rebellion, and anarchy a more extensive and resistless dominion ? No, rather let us glorify God in all his ways ; let us acknowledge the insufficiency of our understandings, to fathom his unfathomable mysteries ; and if hitherto we have conceived any notions unworthy so adorable a Being, let us confess our infirmity with *David*. With him, let us praise and magnify thee, and gratefully own, that *Unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy, FOR thou renderest to every one according to his work.*

What then, Christians, remains for us to do, but seriously to weigh the consequences flowing from these infallible truths ? The horror, with which you ought to look down on the miseries of a future unhappy

happy state, sufficiently appears from the extraordinary pains which evil men take in attempting to argue away the *Eternity* of them. Why all this labour to disprove the *Eternity* of Hell-Torments? Can it arise from any other source than a corroding conscientiousness of deserving them? When a man, in any pursuit, is in danger of what he cannot conceive without dread and dismay, he has but one of these two means to have recourse to; either to remove the danger, or lessen his fears, if he will continue his career. Hence, when a man, in the search of pleasures forbidden by his Maker, reflects on the terrors of a future state consequential to his lawless pursuit; what has he to do, but either to remove the danger by relinquishing that pursuit, or to lull his fears by lessening the idea of the objects which creates them? Thus *Wicked Men*, who are inflexibly bent on their pleasures, cannot make choice of the former, and therefore have recourse to the latter. Punishments, they are sure, will one day be their portion, and severe ones. The voice of guilt, loudly striking their conscience with perpetual din, leaves them no room to doubt of them: But they are future ones, of an undetermin'd nature, and not so obvious to their senses as the present pleasures they have in view, and therefore not so striking. What then have they to do? Relinquish their pursuit and remove the danger they will not; pursue their pleasures they cannot, while the terrors of certain punishments stand in their way. This terror therefore, is to be destroy'd by changing the idea of it's object. While they look upon the miseries they fear as *eternal, everlasting, and without end*; their reason, however corrupt, tells them, that fleeting pleasures cannot be worth pursuing at the expence of *eternal* wretchedness: and as the Will cannot embrace any object, nor come
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to any choice without direction from the mind, they are kept in suspense between the inflexibly fancied good and the dreaded evil. But as soon as the terrifying consideration of *Eternity* is removed from the idea of those miseries, the terror vanishes with it; fleeting miseries are not strong enough to deter them from the pursuit of fleeting pleasures; these are present, determin'd, and striking; those but future, undetermin'd, and unable to strike the senses, because not obvious to them. And therefore, that the will, irrevocably bent on the violation of God's laws in the pursuit of forbidden pleasures in spite of all his promises and threats, may not be stopt in it's career, corrupt reason is call'd in, to it's aid, to remove the *Eternity* of, Hell-torments in favour of vice.

Such are the wretched principles on which are raised the batteries against Hell-Torments. But, alas, how indiscreetly do the wicked act! Since the *Eternity* of these torments is so horrible to them to conceive, why will they not rather destroy both the miserable *Eternity* and the miseries of it, by destroying in themselves that wickedness which is the cause of both? Must they not be obliged to own this a more effectual and a surer way of doing it, than by barely attempting to destroy the belief of it? Whether those Torments are to be *eternal* or not; sure they are, that they will be proportion'd to their crimes, and inexpressibly greater than the pleasure those crimes are capable of giving. But if they should be, as it evidently appears they must be, *eternal*; how wretched will their case be when sad experience shall, with feeling, dreadfully feeling demonstration, convince them of their error! How will they then wish, and wish in vain, that they had not suffer'd their minds to be beguiled by the corruption of their hearts! And

how, alas, will they curse the time when they deluded themselves and others, by attempting to disprove the *eternity* of those Torments which irrevocable, immutable, *eternal* justice forces them (but ah! too late) to own and feel! What will their quibbles then avail them? Will they remove their miseries or revoke their sentence? No, they will only serve to redouble their wretchedness, by adding to it the society of others, whom their illusions shall contribute to make as wretched as themselves.

Notwithstanding the universal belief of all ages, nations, and religions, in the *eternity* of miseries allotted to the wicked, some men are so irrevocably bent on vice, as not to be deterr'd from committing it. How much wider then would not wickedness spread it's dominion, should the dangerous daring doctrine prevail, which asserts those miseries not to be *eternal*? Some indeed there are, it is to be hoped, virtuous enough to pursue the dictates of conscience and religion, independently on any fears of *eternal* Torments, spirited by a more generous love and gratitude to their Maker and Redeemer. But how many more are there among the degenerate race of mankind, whom nothing less than an *eternity* of punishment will deter from offending him? They, whom an *eternity* of Torments will not restrain from committing some insults against God, wou'd refrain from none, were those Torments to be changed into temporal. And those whom nothing but *eternal* Misery can keep in order, how shall temporal punishment render subject to God's laws? What an endless multiplication of sins and sinners must necessarily ensue then, shou'd the scandalous system of a general restoration obtain credit!

But surely, O beloved fellow-creatures, you will shew yourselves more worthy that grace, that reason,

son, and that good sense which Heaven has endow'd you with, than to subject it to absurdity. Surely, O CHRISTIANS, you will shew yourselves more grateful to your GOD, than to rob him of his power to bestow it on vice? Shall the Almighty Creator have made man out of nothing, to be *eternally* happy, and not have a right to punish him for insulting instead of serving him? No, CHRISTIANS, if you have any sense of gratitude in you, you will not allow that a worm, a reptil, a nothing, shall dare to insult an Infinite Being, without deserving an infinite punishment. Will you, in return for his having made you what you are, attempt to make him less than what he is? Will you, to screen a rebellious insect from the infinite punishment he deserves for the infinite insult he has inflexibly persisted in against his Maker, divest God of that immutable truth and justice which is inseparable from his Mercy? No, Heavens forbid! The littleness and contemptibility of the offender, rather enhances than excuses the guilt of his offence. Since so much the more diminutive the person who dares offend this Infinite Being, and so much the more dependent he is on this Being, so much the more malice, arrogance and guilt that littleness argues in the offender. For, however frail he be by nature, God has provided him with sufficient means to raise him above the frailty of his nature. This is sufficient to render the criminal inexcusable, who inflexibly persists in offending him, and to vindicate the Divine Mercy from every shadow of cruelty in punishing with *eternal* Torments, the infinite malice of crimes, committed in defiance of his grace. Let us never therefore presume to harbour the least thought of siding with so malicious an offender against so lenitive a Judge. No, let us praise and glorify Him, as well in the *eternal* Torments he inflicts on the
wicked,

wicked, as in the never ending felicity he bestows on
the Good. Yes, O just and gracious God, we will.
We will never cease to magnify thee in thy deeds.
We will give thee glory and thanks, and will own
aloud that *Unto thee, O Lord, belongeth Mercy, for*
thou renderest to every man according to his work.

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F I N I S

ERRATA.

PAGE vii. l. 28. --- p. ix. l. 25. and p. x. in the last line
but three, for *thy* read *my*. P. 30. l. 30. for *ever*,
read *never*. P. 33. l. 4. for *na*, read *an*. P. 36. after *mea*
sure, add *the*.



